

How to Practice

Tips & strategies that are fun and work really well!

Common Sense Stuff

- Practice by yourself in a spot that is quiet and free of distraction. Turn off your phone, Chromebook, and TV!
- Standing while practicing is best! But if you're sitting, sit in a chair that helps your posture rather than hurts your posture.
- Use a music stand so you're not bent over to see your music. If you don't have a music stand, prop your music up on something.

Practice Strategies

- **Find Sticky Spots**

Don't just play the song until you mess up and start over!!! That doesn't help you improve anything. Find specific, small sections of a song on which to focus your effort. It could be one measure, or even just a couple notes that trip you up.

Extra Tip: Only pick 3 sticky spots per practice session to work on. That way you are not overwhelmed with trying to fix too much music in too little time.

- **Review note names and fingerings out loud before you play.**

- **Play the Rainbow**

Place 5 Skittles (or another treat you like), one of each color, on the left side of your music stand. Choose a short passage of music that needs work (1 or 2 measures). Each time you play it correctly, move one Skittle to the right side of your music stand. If you play it incorrectly, move all the Skittles back. Eat the Skittles ***only when all five*** have been moved to the right side of the music stand. Repeat at a faster tempo or with a new passage, if mastered.

- **Backwards Practice**

Play the last measure of a piece that needs work. Then the last 2 measures...3 measures...4 measures...etc. (Add small sections of music in backwards order until you are playing the whole piece.

- **Pre-Flight Spot Check**

Like a pilot doing a walk-around of the plane before takeoff, identify 1-3 short passages of a piece that sometimes trip you up. Play each passage 3 times ***before*** playing the entire piece.

Advanced Level: "Play the Rainbow" (above) with each short passage before playing the entire piece.

Ideally, practice your instrument 15-20 minutes everyday!
If that's not feasible, 20 minutes three or four times a week is still awesome!